



## Where is your alternate worksite?

### Highlights

- Work sites can be damaged or made inaccessible, displacing workers.
- Alternate facilities include telecommuting options in addition to relocating to other physical locations.
- Department of Administration assists agencies with finding alternate physical facilities.

From recent news reports:

- *A ruptured water valve leads to flooding at the Minnesota State Office Building*
- *Lightning and straight-line winds cause damage to the Board of Trade Building in Duluth, MN.*

We are well aware that similar events could damage our worksite or make it inaccessible. Would you know where to go if your building was not available? To limit disruption of state services, agencies must have a plan to conduct operations from an alternate facility (one of eleven business continuity elements required by [Governor's Executive Order 15-14](#)).

Some agencies might think planning for such an event is unnecessary or will take little effort to organize. Employees will just work from home. But even this simple solution takes planning.

Since technology has become increasingly important in how agencies conduct business, it is vital that agencies coordinate with their IT experts to ensure necessary equipment, software and system access are available and operating when needed, regardless of where employees do the work.

Below are some things agencies should consider when planning for alternate facilities.

**Telecommuting:** This is an effective solution when employees already have remote access capability (i.e., VPN). To ensure other employees can work from home in an emergency, agencies should coordinate with MN.IT, internal IT or their IT service providers to ensure telecommuting is feasible. This includes determining availability of VPN licenses, compatibility of computers and bandwidth requirements.

**Other sites:** Facilities should be a sufficient distance away from the primary facility to

avoid exposure to similar emergencies.

Some agencies have more than one location. Operations may resume more quickly from these sites where technology and telecommunications already support agency services.

Another option is to relocate to another state agency. Most state locations are on the statewide area network (MNET), allowing a more efficient set-up of IT technology and telecommunications. When planning to move to another state agency, the agencies should establish and periodically reevaluate a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) or other written acknowledgment for use of the space.

A third option is to relocate to a non-state facility. However, this option can result in higher costs, such as rent, wiring, etc.

The Department of Administration ([Joel.Nelson@state.mn.us](mailto:Joel.Nelson@state.mn.us)) can assist agencies with selecting alternate physical facilities.

In all options, agencies should ensure the physical space, furniture (tables, chairs), equipment (workstations, printers, scanners) and accessibility accommodations are available or can be readily acquired.

**Education:** Another key step in the alternate facilities plan is to familiarize employees with the plan through staff meetings, training, and/or deployment exercises.

**Suggested action steps:** Make sure you know the alternate facilities plan at your agency. Contact your continuity coordinator or the statewide continuity coordinator ([Patrick.Wolfgram@state.mn.us](mailto:Patrick.Wolfgram@state.mn.us)) for further guidance or questions about your agency alternate facilities plan.

If you have questions, please contact Jo Kane at [Jo.Kane@state.mn.us](mailto:Jo.Kane@state.mn.us) or (651) 201-8174.